



620 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Place Gary, IN 46402

"Doing What is Best for Students - Today - Tomorrow - Everyday"

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**DR. CHERYL PRUITT, Superintendent**  
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To Teresa Brown:

I am writing this correspondence in reference to a IDOE and GCSC Support Plan document that was sent to me on Monday, February 2, 2015 at 11:38 am.

I am disappointed that the department would seek to over exaggerate the assistance provided to GCSC in the following areas:

Director of District Improvement  
Special Education Support  
Federal Programs Support  
Technical Assistance and Professional Development  
Long Range Planning

The administration of GCSC has and will continue to work to lead the work in the district; to make bold and even bolder changes to enhance the educational opportunities for the more than 7000 students we serve. We appreciate the support of the Indiana Department of Education. At this time GCSC cannot support any recommended plan by the IDOE for any of our schools because of the following:

- 1 – Unaware of the plan in totality. What is the plan or the IDOE?
- 2 – Do not know what it means for the Gary Schools.
- 3 – Uncertain as to who will manage the district and/or school.
- 4 – Appearance of a partial takeover.

GCSC will not support any plan that includes a partial or full takeover of our district. We would definitely like to be included in what is submitted in reference to our district whenever possible. The concerns around the GCSC are more holistic in nature. We will continue to work towards educating the children we serve everyday and desire that the department and board will work with us to determine the best manner in which to do so.

As the Superintendent of GCSC, I found it necessary to clarify statements in the document presented by the IDOE because it is important to know that the local community has already began to move forward.

Below you will find my points of clarity:

**Director of District Improvement:**

It is true that IDOE placed a Director of District Improvement, Daniel Bundridge, in the Gary School District to assist with on the ground support for our collaborative work. The following initiatives were district driven with limited; if any assistance from the Director.

The district is working in partnership with ICLE and Scholastic for the development of a district-wide curriculum maps/pacing guides that reflect the new 2014 Indiana Academic Standards. This partnership was garnered by the local Superintendent and added, last year, as part of our Title 1 plan. The local Superintendent has refocused the already established district-wide principal's meeting as modeled professional development meetings.

The local Superintendent worked with the local Title director in the development of the Title plan, allocation of resources, and sought ways for the district to be able to fund the projects as they are reimbursed expenses.

Agreeable terms of the Operation Steering Team have not been determined.

In reference to IDEA, the local administration continue to work with the department, monthly, to receive allocated dollars. The local administration has requested an assessment tool be developed to monitor the assistance by ISU. Currently the administration does not feel the support is sustainable or building capacity for the district.

The district, as part of the partnership with ICLE, has provided each building with experienced educators that serve as coaches for assisting the district to move forward. Coaches will also be assigned to teachers.

IDOE has worked with our Title 1 office and have found nothing to be out of compliance. This is an experienced office as has been founded time and time again to operate efficiently and effective. GCSC issues are that we do not have the dollars to spend to be able to get reimbursed. We have down sized and are getting closer to meeting this challenge, as are other districts.

The local administration and ICLE staff designed the work being done by ICLE in a manner to build capacity and sustainability. Documentation can be provided if needed.

**Financial Assistance:**

IDOE has provided technical assistance to GCSC staff to assist with properly documenting needs to ensure tuition support is reimbursed accurately. The administration is uncertain as to this support.

**Transportation Support:**

There were no cost-saving practices found to date that the local administration was not already implementing however the work did support what we are currently doing.

### **Special Education Support:**

Pursuant to special conditions attached to GCSC's eligibility for Part B federal special education funding, IDOE has used part of GCSC's federal allocation to pay for eight embedded staff at the district for two years (through a contract with ISU). Through its contracted partner, IDOE also directed the use of GCSC's mandatory federal expenditure for Coordinated Early Intervening Services.

GCSC continue to struggle monthly with the department to release funds, however, ISU is not part of the struggle. GCSC would like a measureable tool to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the team as it relates to the compliance concerns. This has not been completed. Often times there are meetings held were GCSC is not involved.

### **Dunbar and School Improvement Support:**

The High Risk Operational Steering Team, when agreed upon, may monitor progress at Dunbar and provide support as the district and school staff implements improvement initiatives.

### **Federal Programs Support**

The 72 hours request was recently established and there has not been time to determine the effectiveness.

### **Long Range Planning:**

The Operational Steering Team, when established, will continue to meet during the 2014-15 school year to engage in long-range planning and develop a district support structure.

Given the monumental difficulties that we experience, GCSC will continue to move forward with all concerned partners to do what is best for our students today, tomorrow and everyday. GCSC and it's stakeholders believe that we must take the lead in our work and hope that all other interested, willing and capable partners will join hands with us.

If possible and in light of some of the unexpected emergencies in our district, I would ask that the board allow the department to meet with the district and all other partners to determine the best additional course of action(s) to turnaround and transform Dunbar-Pulaski. We believe we are well on the way.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cc:

Glenda Ritz

Bob Guffin